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ABSTRACT

A handbook to guide coordinators of parent activities in their role in a quality Head Start program is presented. Discussion includes the following topics: motivation, informal and formal participation, teamwork, and total involvement. A bibliography is attached. (CK)

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P A R E N T I N V O L V E M E N T

S T A F F H A N D B O O K:

a manual for child development programs

b y

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This handbook is dedicated to:

ONIS V. DAVIS

in recognition of, and appreciation for,
her years of service to Head Start.

As she leaves the Directorship of the
Leadership Development Program at Tuskegee
Institute, we thank her for being
the kind of model that is inspiring many
of us to continue the work she has started.

Since "Parent Involvement Staff Handbook: a manual for child development programs"was first compiled in August, 1971; many events have taken place.

This handbook has been distributed in rough draft form to all 26 Head Start programs in Mississippi; and upon publication, will be used in cluster area Parent Involvement staff meetings as a training manual. Thanks to Bruce Williams, who mentioned this handbook in his newsletter, requests for rough draft copies have come from 12 other states.

In updating this handbook, my thanks go to: Katherine Mosley at Jackson State College for adult education resources; Bruce Williams for sharing many fine resources; and Jeanette Jennings for sharing ideas.

My co-author Veatrice is now attending graduate school at the University of Nebraska. Onis Davis has returned home to San Jose, California after leaving the LDP last August.

We hope this handbook will soon be one of a series for parents and Volunteer Coordinators. Suggestions and ideas for these future publications are always welcome.

Christina Lundberg
Jackson, Mississippi
June, 1972

Within the past year, the Coordinator of Parent Activities position in most of Mississippi's Head Start programs have been filled by a full-time staff member. Most of these new Parent Coordinators have experience in Head Start, and have waited patiently for the interpretation of the new Parent Section of the Head Start Policy Manual to give them guidance and direction in fulfilling their role. Also, so they could be about the business of implementing the new Guidelines within their agency.

This handbook was prepared to meet some of the needs and concerns expressed by Coordinators of Parent Activities about their role in a quality Head Start program. This concern grows from a commitment to totally involving parents in the Head Start program, and implementing the new Guidelines amidst domineering and uncommitted staff, and controlling Boards.

We have not tried to write out a step-by-step training plan in this handbook for you, parents, or staff. Training is only worthwhile and meaningful when it meets specfic needs, and we could not hope to prepare a plan to meet everyone's needs. We do, however, hope this handbook will help you identify some needs, and give you assistance in building a stronger parent component. Adapt the ideas in this handbook to meet your needs.

We hope this handbook will inspire all Parent Involvement staff to look closely at themselves, and see how, working together, we can all better fulfill our role in Head Start.

We wish to extend our thanks to our fellow staff members at the Mississippi Head Start Training Coordinating Council and the Leadership Development Program at Tuskegee Institute; and our Directors, Mrs. Onis Davis (LDP) and Mr. Cleve McDowell (TCC).

We also wish to thank Coordinators of Parent Activities in Mississippi and Leadership Development trainees for sharing ideas and concerns with us during the development of this handbook.

Appreciation is also extended to Mrs. Bessie Draper and Mr. John Mouton, Mrs. Bernadette McTighe and Mr. James Sheldon, past and present National and Regional Parent Program Specialists for their editing and assistance in getting this approved for publication.

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C.M.L.
V.M.M.
August, 1971

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P A R E N T I N V O L V E M E N T

S T A F F H A N D B O O K:

a manual for child development programs

Do you see parents as:

Complainers

Illiterate

Unconcerned

Hostile

Poor Models

Maids

Lazy?

Or as:

Models

Consumers

Learners

Concerned

Evaluators

Goal Setters

Resources

Volunteers

Teachers

Policy Makers

Aides

Learners

Observers?

PART I. WHY ME?

Your attitude towards parents reflects in the way you feel about yourself, your job, and the Head Start program.

The first of many steps we will be taking in this handbook to fulfilling your role as Parent Activity Coordinator is to look at yourself-- at the image you project to others, and the way you view yourself when you look in the mirror. Your self-image is reflected in the way you interact with other staff members and Head Start parents. We must begin by first looking objectively at our attitudes about ourself, our attitudes toward others (especially Head Start parents), and how well we relate to other people.

How do you view your job in Head Start? HONESTLY!

A pay check?

A chance to help others help themselves?

An opportunity to be involved?

An educational opportunity to learn about myself and others?

How do other staff members see me?

As a loner?

Someone friendly with a smile?

Someone willing to share information and work together?

A trouble maker?

A gossip who talks about others behind their backs?

Someone who is better than everyone else?

A know-it-all that can't be told anything?

You and Your Relationships

Role expectations change as you mature.

Understanding of results from analyzing differences.

Each person must be able to give and take when differences are discussed.

Each individual is responsible for the effect his habits and attitudes have on other people.

Everyone needs and wants to be an accepted part of the social group in which he finds himself.

The follower, as well as the leader, has a responsibility for his own actions.

Your assets can enrich the lives of others.

Everyone has a responsibility to create happiness.

Poise is the result of knowing how to act by having been successful in similiar situations.

Present values and attitudes indicate future attitudes and values.

Everyone needs to be loved and to love.

The desire to succeed and the willingness to work at any relationship is probably the determining factor of success.

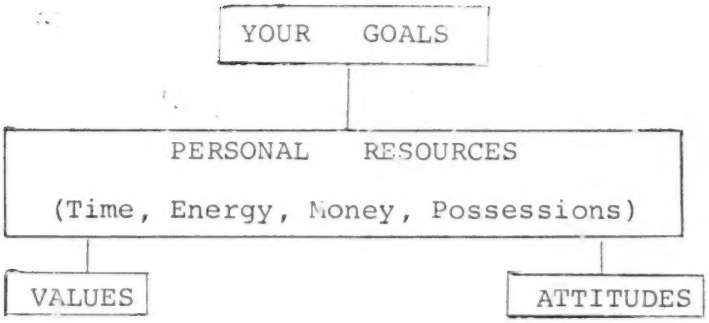
Your attitude toward your task and your ability to do it well determines whether or not it gives you pleasure.

Time, energy, money and possessions are the natural resources of everyone.

Goals are obtained through the wise use of personal resources.

A careful analysis of our priorities helps eliminate the unnecessaries.

Energy can be utilized to obtain one's goals, or it can be squandered.



Anxiety is the greatest motivational force to cause us to change. How anxious are we to do a good job? Are we willing to try and make changes in ourselves in order to do a better job? In order to better fulfill our role as Parent Coordinator?

Maybe we need to also stop and think, what have I got that I'm not using? What are our goals? Do I have the personal resources, values and attitudes to do the best job I can do?

In relating to other people, we have to communicate. Our non-verbal communication (the way we act and treat others) can "say" alot about us and how we feel towards others. The written notices we send out reflect our concern; so they should contain all the vital information-- Where, When, and don't forget WHY! Don't make notices too long, and vary the way you distribute them. Try to make written communications personal in some way.

Most of us find it easy to talk, but that is only one end of the communications chain. What about our listening ability? How many times can you answer "yes" to the following questions?

1. *Do I focus on what others say for the value it often has for me?*
2. *Do I seek out opinions of others and hear them out completely?*
3. *Do I do half-dozen other things while people go on with their story?*
4. *Do I typically search for my next words of wisdom while my companion has the floor?*
5. *Do I have to ask my friends quite a few questions before I catch their meaning?*
6. *Do the questions I ask help the speaker clarify his meaning?*
7. *Even though I let the speaker have his say, do I usually stick to my ideas?*
8. *Do most people talk to let off steam, but rarely get anywhere or make their point?*
9. *Am I able to remember most of the important portion of what is said to me so I can recall it later?*
10. *Do I frankly avoid lectures and talks as a way of learning something?*

* *

We had problems, because....

We lacked cooperation, because....

We lacked communication, because....

We lacked knowledge and understanding.

Now, we have materials and information we can understand, so we....

Communicate about our concerns with others sharing our knowledge....

And soon we will begin to cooperate to solve our problems, TOGETHER!

To effectively communicate we should.....

-Understand and recognize the individuality of parents, their problems, their needs, and the situation in which they live.

-Realize that parents need reassurance.

-Recognize their limitations, as well as their abilities.

-Be familiar with community resources so that referrals can be made.

-Involve the community, make sure it is aware of the support it can give the Head Start program.

-Cooperate with other agencies serving families of children enrolled in Head Start.

-Establish an atmosphere of trust, approval and support through a friendly working relationship with parents and community.

-Realize that parents have an important contribution to make in helping the teacher work effectively with the child.

* *

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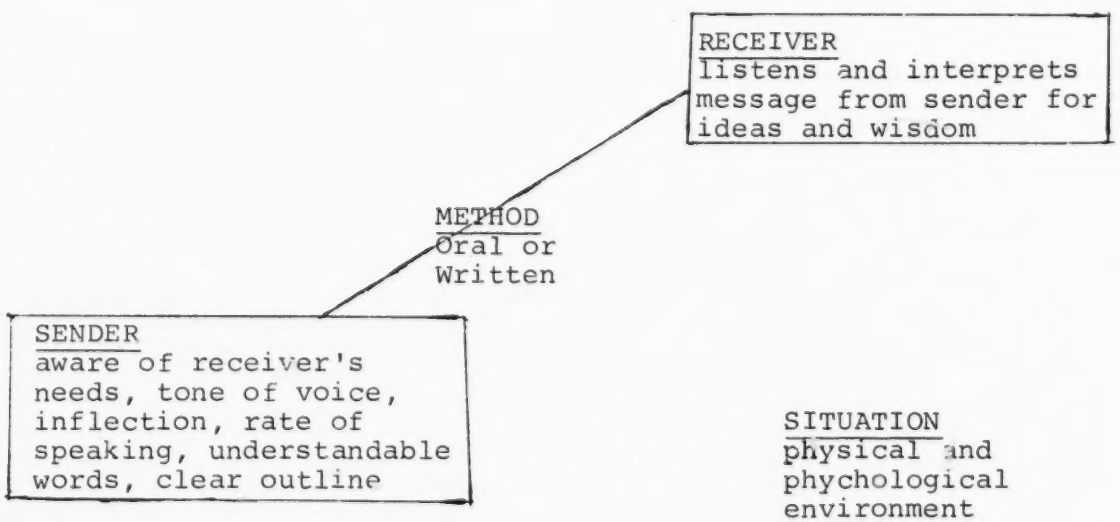
BASIC COMMUNICATIONS


RECEIVER
listens and interprets message from sender for ideas and wisdom
METHOD
Oral or Written
SENDER
aware of receiver's needs, tone of voice, inflection, rate of speaking, understandable words, clear outline
SITUATION
physical and phychological environment

After we have taken a long, hard look at ourself in a mirror, at our mental concept of ourself, our attitudes and our methods of communication; we need to stop and recognize the importance of parents in the Head Start program. We must totally sell ourself to the need for parents in Head Start, the contributions they can make in every component of the program, and most importantly, how Head Start can help parents.

Through participation in Head Start, parents:

-recognize the qualities they possess.

-understand and appreciate how their children grow and learn, and how this can be extended into their home.

-develop greater belief in themselves and their worth as individuals.

-develop new and improved skills opening avenues to job opportunities.

-increase their knowledge of community resources and facilities, and how they can be used to improve family living.

-have a chance to discuss family, community and personal problems, and possibly have a chance to solve them.

-develop family togetherness through involvement in projects and activities with their children.

-understand the value of parent-school relationships.

If we feel secure about ourself, we can start to help parents develop their self-confidence and self-respect. If we are now fully committed to involving parents in Head Start, we need to look at where our program presently stands.

PART 2. WHERE ARE WE?

Ready for the next step? Honestly answer the following questions to evaluate the present status of your Parent Involvement program. This is based on the concept that you know better than anyone else the strengths and weaknesses of your program. By honestly answering the following questions you can see the progress you have made, and realistically make projections for the future to improve weaker areas.

EVALUATION OF THE PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT

Have you planned and conducted orientation sessions for all new Head Start parents explaining goals of the program, their rights, responsibilities and roles?

Have you set up in-service training for staff, parents and volunteers on Parent Involvement?

Do you keep staff and parents informed of current and planned parent programs through newsletters, etc.?

Do you keep in touch regularly with community groups and organizations?

Do you share information with other staff members about organizations of benefit to families and the community?

Do you prepare reports necessary to the planning, conducting and evaluation of the Parent Involvement component?

When you make home visits or attend parent meetings, do you explain the Head Start program, the many roles parents can play, and their rights and responsibilities?

Have you actively recruited parents as volunteers, and for Head Start activities?

Have you explained the roles and wide range of tasks parents can perform in the classroom and other Head Start components as volunteers?

Do you have on file a TB test for each parent volunteer?

Have you made information available to parents about existing community services, such as job training, consumer education, welfare, etc.?

Have you made note of potential leaders among parent groups and set up training sessions for them?

Have you found out about special skills and interests of parents (more than only at the beginning of the year), so parent's skills can be fully utilized in the program?

Have you assisted in developing educational workshops for parents in your agency and involved parents in career development?

Have you asked for parental suggestions for the improvement of classroom activities and the total Head Start program?

Have parents been involved in curriculum planning?

What other duties, if any, has the Parent Coordinator?

What is the composition of the parent policy-making groups?

How are the policy-making groups selected in your agency? Do you have a chart showing this procedure?

To what extent does the Policy Council participate in policy-making concerning: program planning, establishing personnel policies, establishing grievance procedures, program pre-review, evaluation, and approving personnel decisions?

How much money is allocated in the grant for the Parent Activity Fund? Is this $3 per parent? Who administers and makes decisions regarding expenditures of the fund?

Are all the Center Committees composed of 100% parents?

Are signed copies of all policy-making group minutes on file in a central location?

Does each parent policy-making group have an adopted set of By-laws? Are copies on file in a central location?

Do parent policy-making groups have functioning committees?

Has the training plan for the Policy Council submitted to OCD been implemented?

Are parents welcome at any time in the centers as visitors, observers or volunteers?

What kinds of activities and programs have parents planned and conducted around their interests?

What roles do staff play when attending parent policy-making group meetings?

How is information about existing community services and resources made available to parents?

What arrangements are made for providing transportation and babysitting to enable parents to participate in activities?

Are Head Start materials and information readily available to parents?

What opportunities do parents have to discuss their children's progress with the teacher either at home or in the classroom?

To what extent does the staff work with parents in planning in the other components?

Have you projected some goals for Parent Involvement and steps to achieve these goals for this program year?

What training activities have you attended in the last 6 months that have helped you to do a better job?

How much personal contact do you have with parents that do not serve on policy-making groups?

Is the administration and staff in your program committed to Parent Involvement?

Is information from home visits shared between components?

If you have honestly answered these questions, many coming from the Standard Monitoring Questionnaire, you should have a better sense of direction for the Parent Involvement component.

Next, we need to deal with your specfic tasks as Parent Coordinator. Onto Part 3.

PART 3. WHAT IS MY ROLE ?

Now, let's sift through Parent Involvement materials and Head Start guidelines to see if we can define Parent Involvement and the role of the Coordinator of Parent Activities.

How do you define Parent Involvement?

Is Parent Involvement---

bridging the gap between activities in the Head Start center and activities in the child's home?

a public relations job based on person-to-person contact, communications between staff and parents, and parents to parents?

an educational program for the Head Start staff and parents?

The Head Start Policy Manual outlines 5 basic tasks in the job description for the Coordinator of Parent Activities.

1. Laison between the Head Start center and the community.
2. Assist in planning activities for parents.
3. Coordinate activities of parents in the daily classroom program.
4. Encourage involvement of parents in policy-making decisions.
5. Follow-through on programs to assure that parent's needs are met.

If you go back over the evaluation in Part 2, all 5 of these areas were covered. This evaluation may give us some leads into the areas we are not covering, and areas where we may need future training.

We must admit our weaknesses and needs so we can develop training sessions and workshops that will really be meaningful to us in fulfilling our role. In what areas do you feel you need training or assistance after evaluating your Parent Involvement program, and the tasks outlined above for the Parent Coordinator?

Specfic duties for the Parent Coordinator might include:

Work directly with parents and staff to develop center parent programs, activities, and meetings.

Coordinate center and agency parent education programs.

Serve as a resource person to all parent policy-making groups.

Assist parent policy-making groups in developing, conducting and evaluating training plans.

Serve as a resource person to other Head Start staff.

Identify and develop community resources with Social Services.

Assist in recruiting, training and referring parent volunteers.

Serve as a bridge between parents and staff, center and agency activities.

Assist parents in implementing parent policy-making groups as required by DHEW/OCD.

Make home visits and establish personal contact with parents.

Identify parent interests and skills.

Inform parents of their rights and responsibilities in the program.

Assist the policy-making groups in developing and implementing the Parent Activity fund, and relevant By-laws.

What other specfic duties do you perform in your role as Parent Coordinator? Is there a job description to give you a sense of direction?

The Head Start Policy Manual suggests the following qualifications for the Coordinator of Parent Activities:

A) Training in the fields of Human Development, Sociology or Community Organization.

B) Experience in working with adults.

Very few of us posses formal training in any of the above mentioned fields. We've received our training through practical experience in working with adults. Is this part of our "hang-up", the reason we may feel threatened when a staff member with some education, or a parent confronts us with new ideas or questions?

What part does our formal training, or lack of it, contribute to our self-image? Do we need to go back to Step 1 and re-evaluate our decisions about ourself?

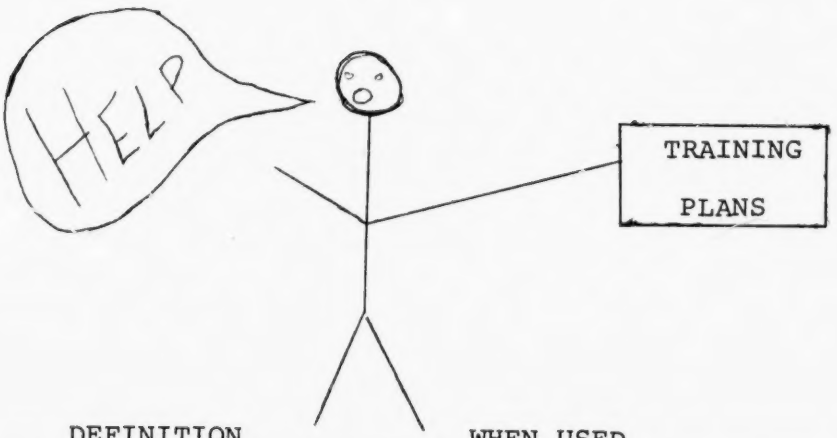
Have we taken advantage of Supplementary Training and CLEP opportunities? Do we try to read books and articles that would help us understand early childhood education theories, consumer problems, communications, cultural and social patterns, etc.? Do we view ourself as a learner and continue to strive to improve ourself so we can better fulfill our role?

If part of our job as Parent Coordinator is to be a resource person to parent policy-making groups and provide them with training and technical assistance; how often do we yell, "I need a consultant!"? Do we lack the self-confidence to conduct our own training sessions; or do we lack the skills of how to plan, conduct and evaluate training?

In Step 1, did you list all your good attributes that can be used in your job? We all have strong points, and we should utilize these skills and attributes, as well as working to improve our weak areas.

Let's not always yell for Help! Let's first draw on our own personal resources, then search out resources in our communities. We should not feel threatened to ask a community resource person with experience and/or training in an area of Parent Involvement to come in and assist us in training. When our concern is for developing a strong Parent component, to meet the needs of our parents, we will forget our fears and ego hang-ups, and work with others to conduct training for parents around their needs. Don't forget that this training will also be a learning experience for you, to help you to make the best use of your knowledge and experience.

For further discussion and use, on the following pages you will find listed 20 different training methods.



METHOD	DEFINITION	WHEN USED
Group Discussion	Opportunity for pooling of ideas, experiences and knowledge.	For majority of meetings because of adaptability to greater group participation.
Buzz Groups	Allows for total participation by group members through small clusters of participants, followed by discussion of the entire group.	As a technique to get participation from every individual in the group. Highly adaptable to other group methods.
Panel Discussion	A discussion in a conversational form among a selected group of persons with a leader, in front of an audience that joins in later.	As a technique to stimulate interest and thinking, and to provoke better discussion.
Symposium Discussion	A discussion in which the topic is broken up into its various phases, and each part presented by an expert or person well informed on that particular phase, in a brief concise speech.	When specfic information is desired.
Debate Discussion	A pro and con discussion of a controversial issue. Objective is to convince the audience rather than display skill in attacking the opponent.	In discussing a controversial issue on which there are fairly definate opinions in the group on both sides to bring these differences out into the open in a friendly manner.

METHOD	DEFINITION	WHEN USED
Experience Discussion	A small or large group discussion following a report on the main point of a book, article, life experience or movie.	To present a new point of view or to present issues that will stimulate thought and discussion.
Discussion with a Consultant	An open discussion in which the consultant sits in as a member of the group.	When an authority is needed to help clarify the thinking of the group after the group has explored the problem and determined the areas in which it needs further help.
Lecture	Conveys knowledge and information which provides common frame of reference to total group.	When the group needs information on a specialized subject of vital interest to them.
Concentric Circle	A small circle of group members within the larger circle. The inner circle discusses a topic while the role of the outside circle is to listen. The discussion is then reversed.	As a technique to stimulate interest and to provoke good discussion. This is especially good to get more response from a group that is slow in partipating.
Reaction Sheet	A method of reacting to ideas in the following ways: Ideas that you questions? Ideas that are new to you. Ideas that really "hit" home.	As a way to get the group to react. Combine this with other methods.
Reactors	Individuals that react to a discussion or a presentation of ideas.	To get a critical analysis of a presentation.
Phillip 66	This is a spontaneous method where 6 people view their opinions on a topic for 6 minutes.	To add spice and variety to methods of presentation.
Reverse Thinking	Expression of thought by thinking in reverse.	To gain insight into others feelings and to see another point of view.

METHOD	DEFINITION	WHEN USED
Workshop	A laboratory period in which members of group work on a project.	When active participation and involvement of all group members is desired.
Picture Making	A way of bringing out ideas or principles on a topic by means of simple illustrations made by group members on the blackboard or large chart.	As a technique to stimulate interest, thinking and participation.
Role Playing	The spontaneous acting out of a situation or an incident by selected members of the group.	As the basis of developing clearer insights into the feelings of people and the forces in a situation which facilitate or block good human relations.
Blackouts	A rapid succession of 4 or 5 brief role-play-scenes depicting various methods of handling certain problems. Some type of curtain(blanket) is used before and after each scene.	An interesting way to present a number of solutions to a problem in a series of brief scenes to stimulate group discussion.
Brain-storming	Technique where members of a group solve a problem during an allotment of time.	To get new ideas, and release individual potentialities in thinking up ideas.
Field trips and Observations	Group members make visits and bring information back to the group.	Provides group with common experience for discussion, and method for understanding applicability of theory and knowledge to specfic situations.
Audio-visual Aids	A means of information giving.	Systematic presentation of knowledge. Should be used with other methods.

If training is one of our weak areas, we need to admit it so training sessions can be developed to go over these various training methods to better prepare ourself to be a trainer.

PART 4. MOTIVATION

If in fact Parent Involvement is a public relations job, dealing with communications and motivation, let's look first at why people are motivated to join groups:

-The group respects me as a person.

-The group has leaders who get things done.

-I have a chance to be a leader.

-I am included in the planning.

-I have an opportunity to help others help themselves.

-The group has a worthwhile purpose with which I agree.

-My friends are in the group.

-I am told when I do a good job.

-I have an opportunity for self-improvement.

-It helps me to understand other people better.

-I get a chance to meet new people.

-The group does more than just talk.

-Meetings are not too long.

-The meeting dates and times are convient.

What about the meetings in your agency? Are parents motivated to join parent groups because the above needs are being met through group participation?

Check yourself on how many of the following techniques you are using to motivate parents in your agency.

1) *Be friendly and truly interested in parents and their children.*

2) *Make get acquainted home visits, and get acquainted socials in the centers.*

3) *Listen to parents in order to pinpoint their needs.*

4) *Encourage parents to make agendas, take notes, and otherwise run their meetings.*

5) *Help parents to work on issues of their choosing.*

6) *Help parents pick an issue that will be fairly easy to resolve to start with.*

7) *Request Parent Activity Funds in the agency budget.*

8) *Parents should be encouraged to visit other centers and agencies to exchange ideas with other parent groups.*

9) *Staff must support self-conscious and shy parents to get them involved.*

10) *Provide transportation and babysitting.*

11) *Have a suggestion box.*

12) *Recognize parents efforts in a newsletter and certificates of service.*

13) *Encourage parents to meet in homes or community places.*

14) *Take slides or movies of parent activities to show to parent groups.*

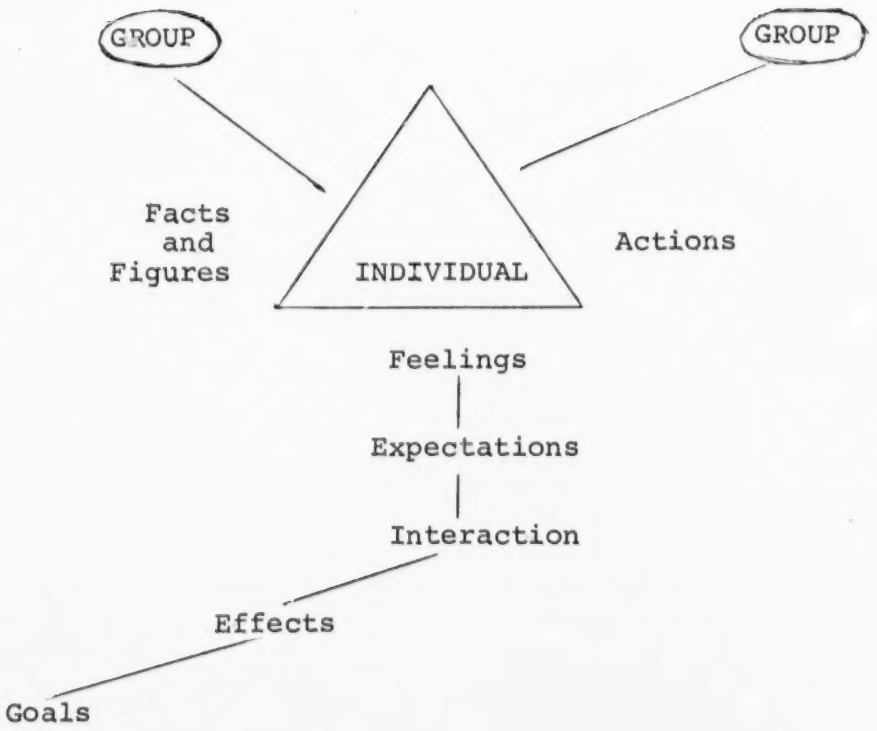
15) *Include parents in training programs with the staff.*

16) *Provide training for elected parents so that they completely understand their functions and roles.*

17) *Provide training with parents for new parents to outline their roles, rights and responsibilities in the program.*

18) *Work with parent leaders to provide them with the materials and communications channels to motivate other parents.*

19) *Work with community leaders and influential persons so they in turn can motivate others.*



Many of these motivational tips depend on our speaking up for parents within the agency, and realizing how people are motivated and the effects of group relationships on the individual. This goes back to being totally committed to the need and place of parents in Head Start. Relating to other staff members goes back to our methods of communications and self-image. If Parent Involvement is a public relations job, then the total staff must be involved.

The next 3 parts deal with staff involvement in the parent component to assist the Parent Coordinator and parents.

PART 5. STAFF AND RECRUITMENT

In many cases, Head Start parents may have more contact with their child's teacher or a Social Service Aide, then with you. Have you been active in planning and conducting Parent Involvement training sessions for the entire staff during pre- and in-service training sessions?

The 10A booklet outlines the duties of Head Start staff in the process of involving parents as:

RECRUITMENT ----------→ PARTICIPATION ---------→ INVOLVEMENT

Let's go over the How's and Why's for these three areas, and think of how and why we need the total staff involved.

The recruitment process can be the beginning of our person-to-person contact with Head Start parents. Through door-to-door canvassing or phone calls, we reach individual people; and through us they see Head Start! The kinds of publicity we prepare for store windows, newspapers or radio also reflects Head Start. Let us remember to stay down to earth, and keep our oral and written communications in understandable language.

Through the recruitment process, staff members have a chance to meet prospective Head Start parents and make contacts with community services and resources. If the total Head Start staff is involved, many new ideas for groups or possible resources should

come out. Everyone has to work together, sharing ideas and communicating to develop a quality Head Start program.

Why do we actively need to recruit parents?

1. *To ensure that HEW/OCD and agency eligibility requirements are met.*
2. *To inform parents about their many roles in the Head Start program and to stimulate their interest.*
3. *To identify parent's interests, talents and needs by observation and listening.*
4. *To encourage parent participation in all components of the Head Start program.*
5. *To develop an interest and possible future involvement of the community in the Head Start program.*

The recruitment process is the important first step in true parent involvement. Therefore, all persons making this initial contact must be "sold" on parent involvement and be able to explain the many roles parents play, as well as their rights and responsibilities. It might be helpful for the Center Committee to have parents available to accompany staff during this recruitment phase to assist in informing the parents of their roles, rights and responsibilities.

To leave with the parent something to read and think about; as well as giving the interviewer something to talk with the parent about, you may find it helpful to develop a "Head Start Information Sheet for Parents". This sheet could contain information about the over-all Head Start program, the center

the child would attend: size, staff, address and phone, hours of operation; Rights and Responsibilities of parents; many roles parents can play in Head Start; all the components of Head Start; 4 major areas of parent involvement in Head Start; and any other relevant information.

This is probably NOT the time to ask questions about when they want to volunteer or fill out long forms on their interests; however, by leaving a basic information sheet, follow-up contacts can be made by staff or parents.

Once the recruitment process has been completed, a special meeting of the Center Committee maybe helpful to have parents start meeting each other, prior to the night of elections.

Realizing that all parents will not be elected to positions on the Center Committee or higher parent policy-making groups; we must next look at motivating parents to participate in other parent planned activities.

PART 6. INFORMAL AND FORMAL PARTICIPATION

After we have recruited the child for Head Start, we may need to motivate the parents to participate in informal and formal Head Start activities and programs. Try to encourage a group of parents to plan these activities and send out notices of meeting times and dates. Parents respond to parents better than they do to staff.

Informal activities may include: *morning coffee at someone's home, afternoon meetings with center staff while the children are resting, family picnics, trips, etc.* Financing these activities can come from the Parent Activity Fund, which should help to motivate parents if they know they don't have to pay.

By participating in these types of informal activities, staff and parents can learn more about each other; build the trust necessary to communicate openly; staff can start to identify potential leaders; parents become more aware of their many roles and responsibilities in Head Start; and parents begin to discuss the kinds of needs they share, around which parent education programs are developed.

Informal social activities play an important role in the Parent Involvement component. Through these activities, the ice is broken between parents and staff, and between parents.

Parents start to develop a feeling of belonging to a group, to meet new people and to share common interests and concerns. These are some of the basic needs that must be fulfilled for a person to want to be a group member. So don't underestimate the value of these informal social activities in the Head Start program.

Parent activities of the informal, social kind are most important to bring people together. However, we must progress beyond the weekly socials, card playing, bingo, and coffee drinking. We must help parents develop a balance of informal and formal activities. After parents feel secure as members of a group, and have identified with its needs and goals, they will be more willing to participate in policy-making and more formal parent activities.

Formal parent activities fall into 4 main categories:

1. *Policy-making groups;*
2. *Training sessions for elected parents;*
3. *Recruiting and training parents as paid employees or as volunteers; and*
4. *Parent education programs.*

Training for elected parents should be centered on their specfic roles and functions in the various levels of policy-making. Training should include: *a) how groups can function*

effectively; b) problem solving techniques; c) communications; d) group membership and team work; e) Head Start policies and guidelines; f) making policy decisions; g) role of the Head Start staff, h) interrelationship with other policy-making groups; i) planning, conducting, participating, and evaluating meetings; j) evaluating the Head Start program; and k) developing By-laws.

As the new Parent program guidelines state: "Staff members may attend meetings of councils or committees in a consulatative non-voting capacity upon request of the council or committee." We should encourage Head Start Center Committees and the Policy Council to invite staff members to their meetings. This will help develop the communications that are necessary so the staff will not feel that parents are plotting behind their backs. Informed staff will encourage parents to accept their policy-making roles. Staff should be invited to discuss various phases of the Head Start program as a way of also keeping the parents informed. The staff should not try to keep the parents in the dark. Parents may need to be invited to staff meetings, to better understand the program plans and goals. Reports from staff meetings should be made at Center Committee meetings to inform all parents.

All parents should be aware of the levels and policy-making functions at each level in the Head Start program. Remember we

are not trying to hide information from parents. It would be better to share with them this type of information, then for them to get the wrong information; or for parents to ask for our policy-making chart and to be told we don't have one! This chart could be part of a Parent Handbook developed by your program, which might also include:

1. *Our Head Start program- goals, program year, enrollment procedures*
2. *4 areas of Parent Involvement- expanded section on Volunteers and parent developed activities*
3. *Policy-making chart*
4. *By-laws and functions of Center Committees and Policy Council*
5. *Election procedures*
6. *Grievance procedures*
7. *Staffing patterns and role of Parent Coordinator*
8. *How to conduct meetings*
9. *Parent motivation- assistance with travle and babysitting*
10. *Parent Activity Fund*
11. *State and national parent organizations*
12. *Whom to call- local resources*
13. *Bibliography*
14. *Public relations activities- newsletter, etc.*

After training the elected Head Start parents, they may act as resources to explain these functions to their local parent groups, with you acting only as a consultant. Start to develop the parents leadership abilities and skills, so they can be resource persons. It is often more effective to have parents training parents! To effective train other parents, the elected parents must first understand the functions of the various policy-making groups. The functions for the Policy Council and Center

Committee are included here for your convience.

Functions of a Policy Council are:

1. *Initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvements, and to receive a report on action taken by the administering agency with regards to its recommendations.*
2. *Plan, coordinate and organize agency-wide activities for Head Start parents with the assistance of the staff.*
3. *Administer the Parent Activity Fund.*
4. *Recruit volunteer services from parents, mmunity residents, and community orgainzations; and mobilize ommunity resources to meet identified needs.*
5. *Communicate with all parents and encourage their full participation in the Head Start program.*
6. *Approve the goals for Head Start within the agency as proposed by the Grantee Board of Directors; and develop ways to meet these goals with HEW/OCD Guidelines.*
7. *Approve the locations of Head Start centers.*
8. *Assist in developing a plan for recruitment of eligible children and approve such a plan.*
9. *Approve the composition of the appropriate parent policy-making groups and methods for setting them up within HEW/OCD guidelines.*
10. *Approve the services provided to Head Start from the Grantee central office.*
11. *Be responsible for hearing and resolving community and parent complaints about the Head Start program.*
12. *Be consulted to ensure that standards for acquiring space, equipment and supplies are met.*
13. *Be consulted in the direction of the Head Start staff in the day to day operations.*
14. *Approve or disapprove the Head Start Personnel Policies and Procedures (including establishment of hiring and firing criteria for Head Start staff, Career Development plans, and employee grievance procedures).*
15. *Approve or disapprove the hiring and/or firing of the Head Start Director.*
16. *Approve or disapprove the hiring and/or firing of the Head Start staff. With priority to hiring to qualified Head Start parents.*
17. *Approve the request for funds and proposed work programs (the grant application) prior to sending to HEW, with sufficient time to study the grant application and ask questions of Head Start and Grantee personnel.*

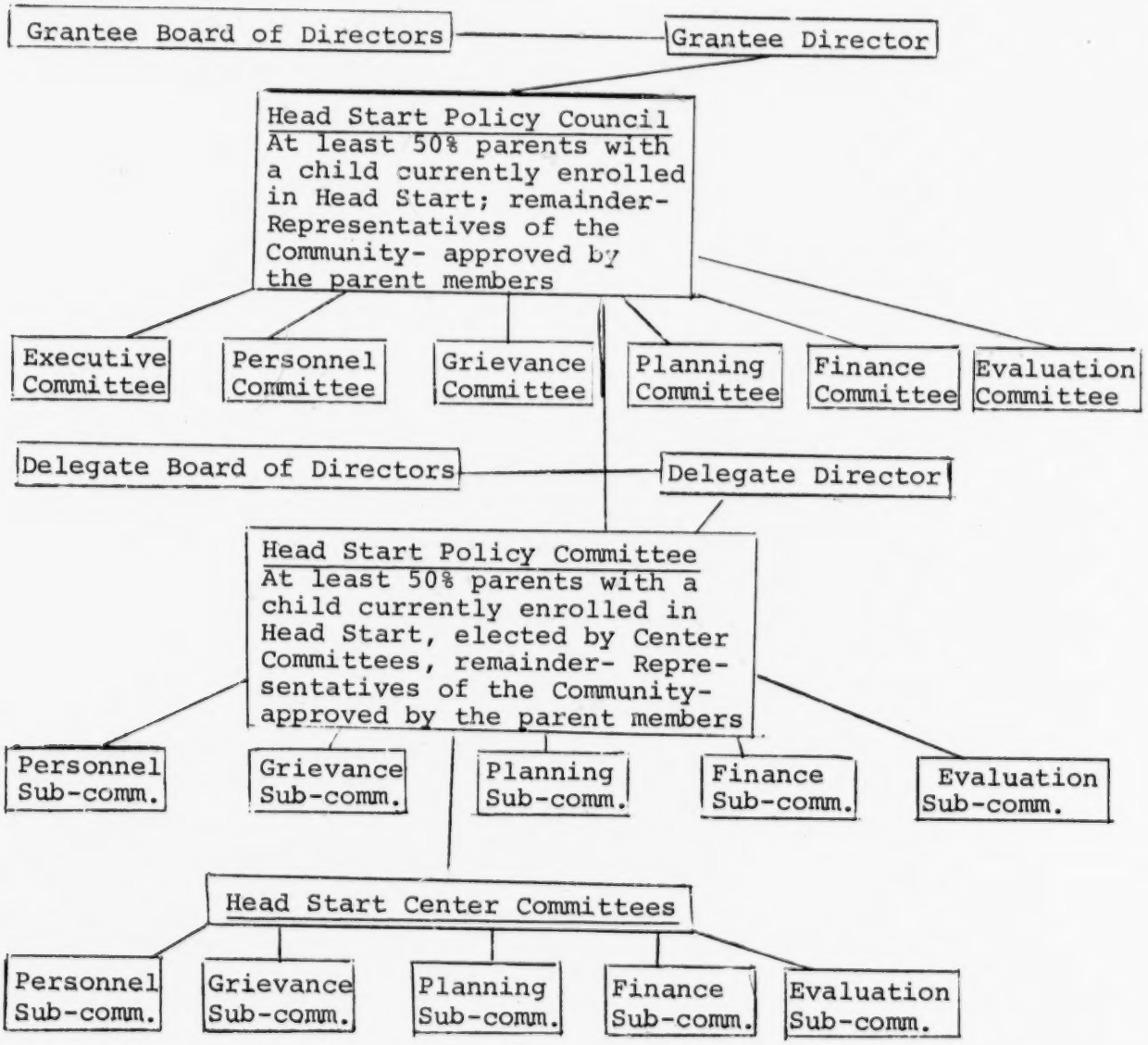
18. *Approve major work changes in the Head Start operating budget and work program while the program is in operation.*
19. *Approve information prepared for the pre-review to HEW.*
20. *Conduct a self-evaluation of the Head Start program.*

Functions of a Center Committee are:

1. Assist the Center staff in the development and operation of every component, including curriculum, in the Center's Head Start program.
2. Work closely with the classroom teachers and all other component staff in carrying out the daily activities.
3. Plan and conduct informal and formal activities and programs for all Head Start parents in the Center.
4. Recruit, screen and recommend persons to be employed to fill vacancies in the Center staff to the Policy Council, within Guidelines established by HEW/OCD, the Grantee Board and the Policy Council; with preference being given to qualified parents to fill any vacancies.
5. Approve the hiring and/or firing of the Center Director.
6. Hear and resolve complaints from parents and the community concerning the Head Start program at the Center through the Grievance procedure established by this Center Committee.
7. Be responsible for securing the volunteer services from parents and community sources to meet the Center's share of in-kind.
8. Make recommendations to the Policy Council concerning expenditures of the Parent Activity Fund.
9. Communicate with all parents with a child currently enrolled in the Center and encourage their full participation in the Head Start program.
10. Conduct a self-evaluation of the Center's operation.

Once elected parents understand their functions, roles on the policy-making groups and purposes of the groups, they can assist you in training other parents at the Center level. A sample outline of a policy-making chart is on the following page for your information. Remember this is only a sample, and you will need to revise it to fit your agency.

POLICY-MAKING IN HEAD START
(sample outline)


Grantee Board of Directors
Grantee Director
Head Start Policy Council
At least 50% parents with a child currently enrolled in Head Start; remainder- Representatives of the Community- approved by the parent members
Executive Committee
Personnel Committee
Grievance Committee
Planning Committee
Finance Committee
Evaluation Committee
Delegate Board of Directors
Delegate Director
Head Start Policy Committee
At least 50% parents with a child currently enrolled in Head Start, elected by Center Committees, remainder- Representatives of the Community- approved by the parent members
Personnel Sub-comm.
Grievance Sub-comm.
Planning Sub-comm.
Finance Sub-comm.
Evaluation Sub-comm.
Head Start Center Committees
Personnel Sub-comm.
Grievance Sub-comm.
Planning Sub-comm.
Finance Sub-comm.
Evaluation Sub-comm.

Training for parent Volunteers must be coordinated with the entire Head Start staff for parents to be effective volunteers in the component of their choice. Is there any reason why parent volunteers could not be used in the agency's Central office as receptionist or typist? These types of volunteer services offer training possibilities that will aid parents in gaining new skills for future employment.

If we want to involve the entire Head Start staff, don't forget the clerical staff, janitors and cooks. Volunteering as a nurse aide, social service aide or parent involvement aide could stimulate a parent's interest in working in the medical or social work field. Parents may be inspired and encouraged by staff to take advantage of formal educational opportunities and training.

A sub-committee at the Center level may have the responsibility for planning parent education meetings or workshops. Using Head Start staff and community resources, the range of topics that could be covered are limitless! The Parent Coordinators' role, as a resource person to the Center Committee, would be to offer suggestions of possible programs they could plan to meet their needs; and to help parents compile a list of community resources.

Remember that nay materials prepared for adults should be written for adults. The basic fault of many adult education programs is that they fail to prepare materials for adults, they use elementary school materials. What an insult to an adult! Whatever stimulation they had to join an adult education program would be lost by insulting them with children's materials. Many exceptional adult education materials are now available, and some are listed in the Bibliography. Perhaps you need to develop a resource library in your office. This could stimulate parents to explore new topics.

Although the list of topics for formal parent education classes are limitless, it might be helpful to include a few ideas here.

How a child develops between ages 3 and 5.
The importance of preschool education and Head Start.
How to buy wisely and budget your money.
Nutritious low cost meals.
Help from our community.
Understanding sickle cell anemia.
Activities for you and your Head Start child at home.
Developing meaningful relationships with others.

Just using the above topics, possible resource persons from the Head Start staff include: Education Director, Nutritionist,

Social Services Director, Nurse, center staff, cook, Social Service aide, etc. Parents need more contact with ALL central staff as a means of understanding all the Head Start components.

As a possible resource person, or leader, for parent education programs; your role is helping parents extend their knowledge from experiences of other parents; materials presented by resource persons; and from thinking through new ideas as they relate to their lives. Also, you need to create an atmosphere for learning; start and guide discussion when necessary; foster relationships and group interaction; and set a good example as a leader. Do not dominate the meeting, nor should you allow another individual to take over. Give everyone a chance to express their views and opinions.

* *

QUALITIES OF A LEADER

Blessed is the leader who knows where he is going, why he is going, and how to get there.

Blessed is the leader who knows no discouragement, who presents no alibi.

Blessed is the leader who knows how to lead without being dictatorial.

Blessed is the leader who leads for the good of the most concerned, and not for the personal gratification of his own ideas.

Blessed is the leader who develops leaders while leading.

Blessed is the leader who has his head in the clouds but his feet on the ground.

Blessed is the leader who considers leadership an opportunity for service.

Parent participation in thes formal activities will help parents:

develop meaningful insights into the Head Start program and their roles as parencs;

clarify their understanding of their responsibilities as parents and to the Head Start program;

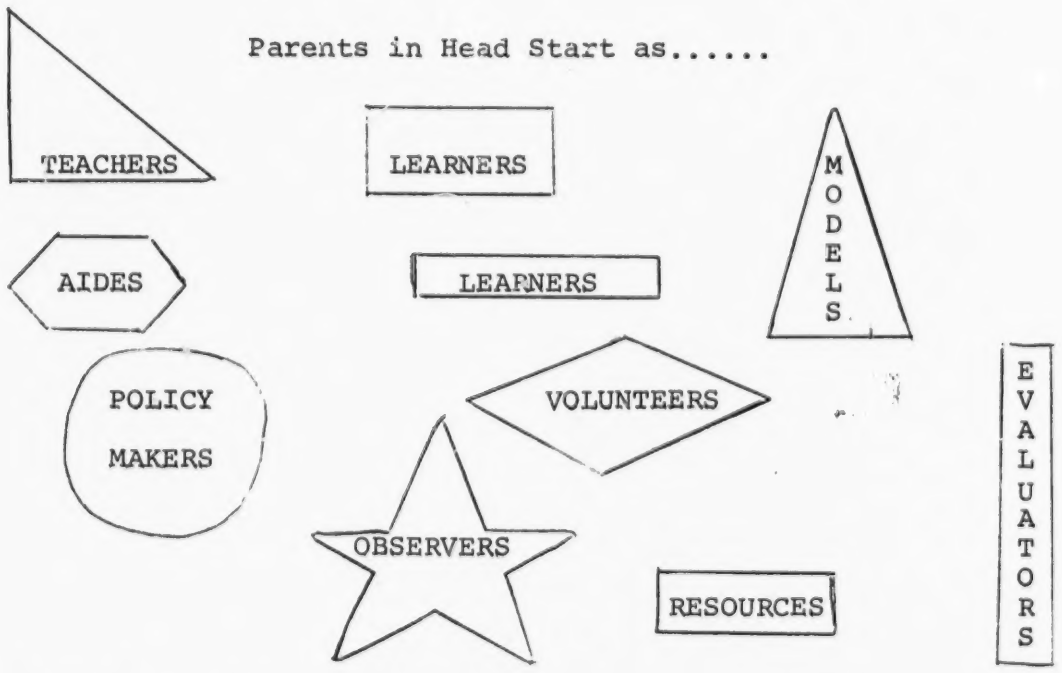
through parental involvement the child's program will be supplemented and enriched;

become more aware or community problems, the steps to use in solving these problems, and other groups working to solve similiar problems;

and most of all, parents will have the chance to develop leadership skills and self-confidence necessary to continue working with groups.

* *

Parents in Head Start as.....



PART 7. TOTAL INVOLVEMENT

After recruitment and participation, the last area for staff in the process of Parent Involvement in Head Start is the whole area of:

T O T A L I N V O L V E M E N T.

For parents to be totally involved:

they will become active community change agents;

they will provide a wholesome environment for their families;

they will have the chance to develop new skills; and

they will improve the social, educational and economic levels of their lives through increased knowledge of resources, application of the problem-solving processes, and skills they have developed.

For a Head Start parent to be totally involved, her horizons must be broadened beyond the Head Start program and into the community in which she lives. Parents should realize how the leadership skills and knowledge gained through participation in the Head Start program can be utilized in identifying and solving community problems.

To help parents to develop the self-confidence and leadership skills they need to become active community change agents, the Head Start staff should encourage parents to: serve on Head Start policy-making groups; expand meaningful parent education programs (such as consumer education or community resources) to involve all community residents; make use of all community re-

sources; become involved in community sponsored activities, or start some; be willing to serve on policy-making groups of other agencies within the community, such as PTA or church; and utilize all resources within their community, county and state to provide a wholesome environment for their families.

To get the entire staff commited to Parent Involvement, we must start with the top level administration and governing Boards. Training for Boards and Policy Council may need to be developed to help each understand their roles and functions in relation to the other group. Top level administration must help you clearly define your role and job; as well as being commited to the many opportunities and need for parents in the total Head Start program.

Because the role of Parent Coordinator is new to most of us, we need to develop on-going training for ourselves, so we can learn training techniques to develop and conduct on-going training for parents in our agency.

Mr. Mouton provided us with information on the Head Start Guidelines for Parents, I-30, when he interpreted the Guidelines for us in December, 1970. Mr. Sheldon has provided all of us with a training technique to use with parents and staff to help them understand the new Parent Guidelines.

Within each agency we should be made aware of, or help develop, a staffing plan and job description, so we will know exectly our relationship to the Head Start Director, other central office staff, and center staff. We need to see that charts describing the relationships between grantee and delegate agencies, their Boards and parent policy-making groups are developed and distributed to parents and staff. These charts should also outline specfic duties and responsibilities to be acrried out at each level by each group.

By working with other Head Start staff, community people and parents, we should develop a list of community resources to help with specfic problems. This list could be used in all Head Start components, and in parent meetings.

Using the hand-outs distributed at our first Parent Involvement workshop in November, 1970 ("Notes from: Dynamics of Citizen Participation" and "Overview of Planning, Administering and Evaluating a Training Event"); we should develop insights into working with and involving individuals and groups in Head Start; organize people into meaningful teams to work on programs and problems; develop meaningful training plans for Head Start staff; serve as a resource person to parent education and policy-making groups; and assist parents in planning meaningful, on-going workshops to meet their specfic needs.

PART 8. IT TAKES TEAMWORK

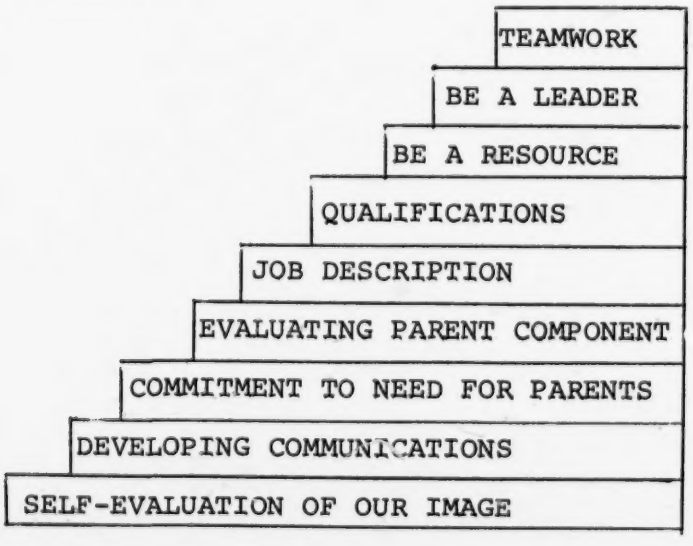
There are many steps to climb to fulfill the role of Coordinator of Parent Activities. This handbook has dealt specfically with staff personnel working with parents, but we hope to soon prepare a booklet for Coordinators of Volunteers.

The climb to fulfill our role may not always be easy; but then many things worth doing are not easy.

Just remember you are not alone in your climb. Other Parent Coordinators are nearby; your friendly STO is always willing to assist you; and the Regional Parent Program Specialist is available when needed.

If we all work together by sharing ideas and resources; we can climb the steps together, sharing the load, and sharing the VICTORY!

If not now, when?????



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#6- Parents
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#10A- Parent Involvement
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Beautiful Junk
My Rights and Responsibilities as a Parent
Volunteer Recruitment Poster
Pattern for Head Start flag
Certificate of Appreciation for Volunteer
Certificate of Completion of Nutrition and Food Course for Parents
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